

Benefits from the Levy System

SPOTLIGHT > APPLES AND PEARS

Future Orchards

Launched in 2006, Future Orchards® provides growers with practical and hands on education to help increase the fruit quality and productivity of their orchards and help them become internationally competitive.

Future Orchards holds regular orchard walks (held twice a year in each of the eight growing regions) and business development groups, and provides access to the online benchmarking database 'OrchardNet®', Australian Orchard Business Analysis data, Australian Fruitgrower technical articles and webinars.

The project was designed to increase production, lower orchard production costs per kilogram of fruit, increase the percentage of premium fruit harvested and bring Australian orchardists up to international competitiveness in the domestic and export markets.

Future Orchards original goal was to help apple and pear growers understand intensive production systems within two years, to ensure all new plantings were intensive within five years and to have an internationally competitive industry in Australia within 10 years. The project is well on track to achieving these goals.

In addition, the project monitors designated blocks with different tree densities and issues in each apple and pear growing district. Orchard walks are held regularly in each growing region to give growers first hand comparisons of the costs and benefits of adopting different orchard production systems and approaches.

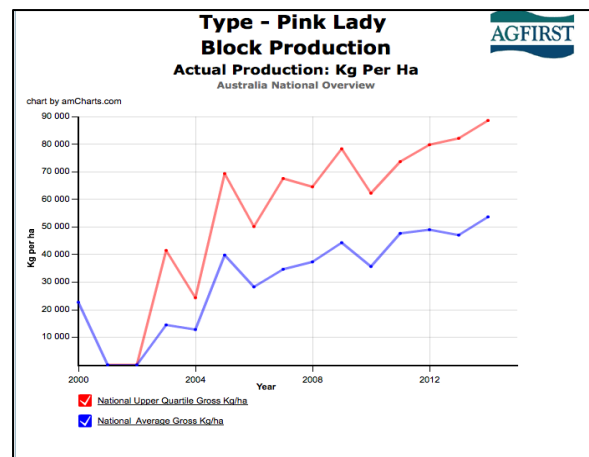
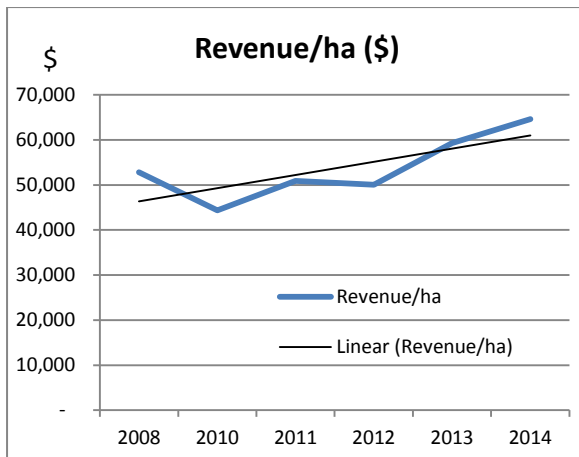
The project has been well received leading to an iteration of the Future Orchards concept focused on the strategic goal of "Growing high quality fruit at internationally competitive prices."

Outcomes:

The outcomes of any technology transfer project can be difficult to measure, but APAL believes that the documented outcomes of the Future Orchards projects over time are impressive. Several of these outcomes have become clearer during the most recent iteration of the concept (2012 to 2014).

Table 1: Orchard Business Analysis - 2008-2014 Average Gross Yield (tonnes/ha)

	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Av. yield (tonnes/ha)	36.3	31.3	36.6	40.9	39.1	38.7



Future orchards involves a number of project activities for demonstrating world’s best practice and facilitating adoption of these practices.

- National Orchard Benchmarking
- Webinars
- Orchard Business Analysis
- Magazine Articles
- Focus Orchards
- Front line advisors
- Orchard Walks.

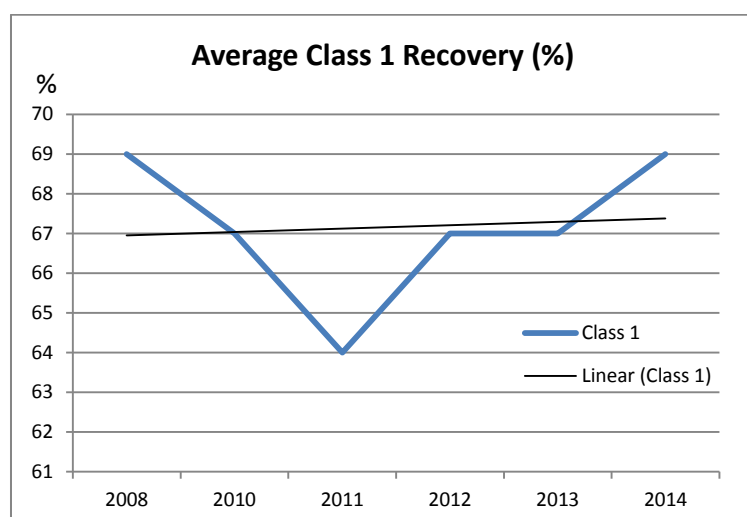
Orchard walks are the central activity of the Future Orchards project. Australia-wide orchards walks are managed as two travel “loops” of four regions each. The northern loop being Stanthorpe, Orange, Batlow and Shepparton and the southern loop being South West Western Australia, Adelaide Hills, Southern Victoria and Tasmania

Orchard walks involve an Agfirst consultant, APAL technical manager and a specialist guest speaker. Focus Orchards set up in each growing region.

“The highlight has been the continual path of business improvement on the Flavell Focus Orchard. The Flavell family have been very receptive to all the inputs provided by Future Orchards over the past 2 years....Their productivity over the 3 years of being a Focus Orchard has gone from 31 t/ha in 2012 to 41t/ha in 2014.”

Ross Wilson, Agfirst.

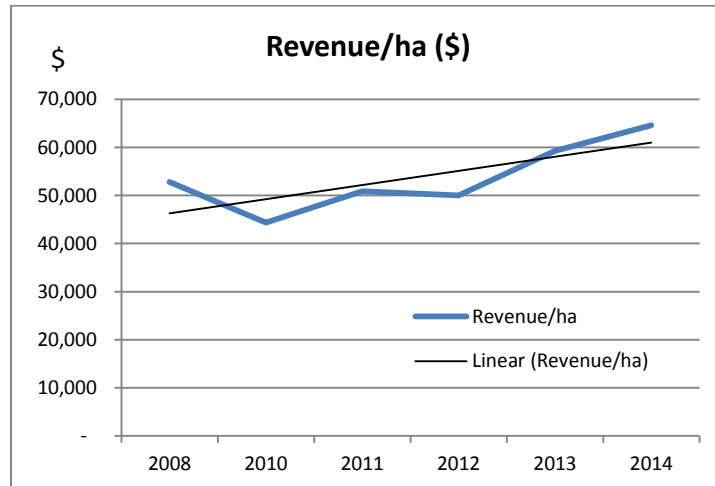
Year	Ave Class 1 Recovery (%)
2008	69
2010	67
2011	64
2012	67
2013	67
2014	69



The trend line indicates an increasing class 1 recovery rate over time with trend-corrected rates growing from 67% to 67.4% over 6 seasons.

Data for the average revenue per hectare on a national level gathered from the OrchardNet inputs indicates the outcomes shown in the table and graph below. Although in any business it would be expected to see a growth in revenue over time, it should be noted that the growth indicated by the trend line is well above the national rate of inflation. Also, the revenue noted here is on a per hectare basis rather than an enterprise basis.

Year	Revenue / Ha (\$)
2008	52,825
2010	44,334
2011	50,913
2012	50,033
2013	59,271
2014	64,604



The three graphs above indicate that the apple industry has shown significantly positive outcomes since the inception of Future Orchards with the current project continuing the positive trends.

To view more grower stories highlighting the success of Horticulture Levy investments to date visit the Voice of Horticulture website > <http://voiceofhorticulture.org.au/>